ROBERT KIRKMAN LORENZO DE FELICI MATHEUS LOPES

VOID RIVALS

image

#04

ENERGON UNIVERSE

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CHANGING COURSE.

SENDING SECURITY CLEARANCE CODE.

WRAMM

=AAACK!=

IF YOU COMPLETED THE CLEARANCE CODES, UNSEND THEM, AND RESET COURSE TO AGORRA.

OTHERWISE, AS MUCH AS I'D PREFER NOT TO, I WILL BLAST YOU UNCONSCIOUS AND WE'LL JUST WAIT TO SEE WHO GETS TO US FIRST.

HOW DID YOU DO THAT?

THE BRAIN MOVES THE BODY WITH ELECTRICAL IMPULSES. I'M LIKE AN EXTRA BRAIN FOR YOUR HAND. I JUST CAN'T MOVE THE WHOLE BODY.

BUT I CAN MOVE IT ENOUGH.

WELL, MY SECOND QUESTION IS HOW YOU ***SEE?*** BECAUSE IF YOU WERE PAYING ATTENTION, YOU'D REALIZE YOU ARE IN ***NO*** POSITION TO BE MAKING DEMANDS.

OH.

IF I LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS, OR MY ***BALANCE,*** THIS SPEAR GOES PLUNGING INTO YOUR... HOST'S CHEST.

I ASSUME YOU HAVE PROTOCOL AGAINST THAT?

I DO.

SURRENDER?

SURRENDER.

I ASSUME THERE'S SOME KIND OF FAILSAFE THAT WILL INJURE ME IF I TRY TO ***REMOVE*** YOU?

CORRECT.

BEHAVE YOURSELF.

ZERTONIA.

=AHEM=

YOU STAND BEFORE ***PREMIER ZALILAK,*** THE GREAT. VANQUISHER OF SCORN. BRINGER OF THE DAWN OF REVELRY. GUARDIAN OF ALL ZERTONIA.

FOUNDER OF THE COUNCIL OF VIRE. FIRST CHOSEN OF THE EMBRACE OF ZERTA. YOU ARE HONORED TO BE IN HIS PRESENCE.

HIS WISDOM IS ABSOLUTE. HIS RULINGS ARE FINAL. YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED THIS AUDIENCE OUT OF RESPECT FOR YOUR STATION.

THAT RESPECT WILL BE RETURNED BY ACCEPTING HIS RULING WITHOUT QUESTION. YOU WILL--

ENOUGH OF THIS.

SPEAK.

THANK YOU FOR GRANTING ME AN AUDIENCE, PREMIER ZALILAK.

MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN RATIONING *DILIGENTLY*, BUT I FEAR IT MAY NOT BE ENOUGH. MY LANDS PROVIDE FOOD SOURCE FOR YOUR GREAT CITY.

SURELY MORE WATER COULD BE PROVIDED FOR--

PREMIER!

A SHIP APPROACHES. ORIGIN, DEEP SPACE.

ZERTONIAN?

AGORRIAN?

NEITHER.

BUT CURIOUSLY, IT HAS TRANSMITTED THE PROPER *SECURITY CODE.*

HMMM.

SOLILA...

I MUST ATTEND TO THIS.

WE WILL SETTLE THESE MATTERS ANOTHER TIME.

THIS IS REALLY SOMETHING. I MEAN... I CAN'T ***BELIEVE*** I FELL FOR THIS. I MEAN, REALLY.

YOU DOUBLE-CROSSED ME.

AFTER EVERYTHING WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, YOU BETRAYED ME. ALL WE'VE DONE TO SURVIVE... AFTER ALL THE TIMES WE SAVED EACH OTHER.

I THOUGHT THAT MEANT SOMETHING.

I THOUGHT WE WERE ***FRIENDS.***

FRIENDS?!

NO. I'M SORRY, BUT THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH AT STAKE FOR MY PEOPLE.

I WILL ADMIT, I NO LONGER CONSIDER US ***ENEMIES,*** BUT FRIENDS? NO.

MORE LIKE... ***RIVALS.***

HAH.

I LIKE THAT. OKAY.

RIVALS IT IS.

I'M SORRY IF I HURT YOU. I COULDN'T RISK A PROTRACTED STRUGGLE.

ME FACING OFF AGAINST A ***ZERTONIAN WARRIOR*** ALONE?

THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST FAVORABLE OUTCOME.

I GET IT. YOU GUYS ARE SO DESPERATE YOU'RE SENDING ***WARRIORS*** TO DO ***PILOTS'*** JOBS.

THAT'S NOT INFO YOU WANT US TO HAVE.

HEAR ME.

IF YOU WANT TO *SURVIVE* WHAT COMES NEXT, YOU KEEP THAT PART TO YOURSELF. YOU KNOW *NOTHING* ABOUT ME.

UNDERSTAND?

NOT EVEN...

ESPECIALLY THAT PART.

OUR HELMETS HAVE BEEN ON THE *WHOLE* TIME. TRUST ME ON THAT.

I WILL ONLY SHARE WHAT WE LEARNED WITH THOSE I AM *SURE* I CAN *TRUST.*

AND YOU, *UH...* KNOW WHO THAT IS.

RIGHT?

WORKING THAT OUT.

THUNK

WHAP

WAS THAT NECESSARY?!

SILENCE, AGORRIAN!

AN AGORRIAN?!

HERE?!

HE'S HIDEOUS!

SHIELD YOUR EYES, DEAR.

MOM!

SOLILA.

I KNEW YOU WOULD FULFILL YOUR DUTY.

NO, MY PREMIER, I HAVE *FAILED* YOU. I WILL ACCEPT WHATEVER PUNISHMENT YOU DEEM NECESSARY.

PUNISHMENT?

FOR BRINGING US SUCH *A GIFT?*

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS OUTRAGE?

YOU DARE BRING A QUINTESSON TO CYBERTRON?!

TO SELL! AS YOUR PRISONER!

AM I MISSING SOMETHING HERE? I THOUGHT YOU HATED EACH OTHER.

WHAT CURRENCY WOULD YOU EXPECT ME TO HAVE THAT I HAVEN'T ALREADY SPENT ON RESOURCES?

I BARELY HAVE ENOUGH ENERGON TO SUSTAIN MYSELF!

MY FELLOW DECEPTICONS ARE IN STASIS.

WELL, THEN I EXPECT YOU TO RELATE TO MY PLIGHT, FRIEND. I'VE GOT MOUTHS TO FEED.

SURELY SUCH A HATED ENEMY TO YOUR KIND IS OF *VALUE?* MAYBE YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO TRADE?

I'M SURE WE CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT. LET'S BE REASONABLE.

REMOVE THIS FOUL CREATURE FROM MY SIGHT BEFORE I COMMANDEER YOUR VESSEL AND STRIP IT FOR PARTS!

FINE, FINE, FINE.

I CAN TELL WHEN MY SERVICES AREN'T APPRECIATED!

I *KNOW* OF THIS DARAK. HE IS THEIR GREATEST PILOT. HE IS OF HIGH VALUE TO THE AGORRIANS.

HE IS A *VALUABLE* ASSET TO US. WE CAN TRADE HIM FOR RESOURCES.

YOUR ACTIONS WILL SAVE MANY LIVES.

SO, HE WILL BE RETURNED TO HIS PEOPLE?

WHEN THEY MEET OUR DEMANDS, YES.

GOOD.

GOOD?

I ONLY MEAN THAT I AM HAPPY TO KNOW HE WILL NOT BE HARMED.

YOU... *CARE* FOR THIS AGORRIAN?

NO.

OF COURSE NOT.

BUT OUR SHIPS CRASHED ON THE SAME PLANETOID. WE HAD TO... *COOPERATE* TO GET HOME.

HE IS MY ENEMY, YES. BUT... WE SURVIVED TOGETHER, AND AFTER EVERYTHING HE WENT THROUGH, I DON'T WANT TO SEE HIM FACE ANY HARM IF IT CAN BE AVOIDED.

SIR?

IN ALL YOUR TIME WITH THIS AGORRIAN... TELL ME...

...DID YOU EVER SEE HIS *FACE?*

...

SO... ANY STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES YOU CAN DETECT?

NONE.

ANY IDEAS?

FOR ESCAPING?

NO, FOR IMPROVING THE LIGHTING.

YES! ESCAPING!

I DEDUCE THAT IF THERE WAS ANY CHANCE I WOULD BE ABLE TO WORK WITH YOU TO FACILITATE YOUR ESCAPE, THEY NEVER WOULD HAVE ALLOWED ME TO REMAIN ON YOUR HAND.

I DON'T MEAN TO GIVE THEM SO MUCH CREDIT, BUT THEY DO SEEM TO BE QUITE COMPETENT IN MOST AREAS.

A FAIR ASSESSMENT.

OH, WELL.

IT BEATS STARVING TO DEATH IN THE COLDNESS OF SPACE.

I DON'T THINK IT'S TIME FOR DESPAIR JUST YET. THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE TREATED YOU SO WELL THUS FAR INDICATES THEY HAVE PLANS FOR YOU.

AND IT WOULD APPEAR THEY NEED YOU WELL TAKEN CARE OF FOR THOSE PLANS.

I SUSPECT THEY'RE GOING TO ATTEMPT TO TRADE YOU BACK TO YOUR PEOPLE IN RETURN FOR MUCH NEEDED AID.

WELL, THAT'S GOOD NEWS.

THANKS, HANDROID, YOU'RE A HUGE HELP.

IN TIMES LIKE THESE, I'M PROGRAMED TO RUN THROUGH HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS THAT WILL HELP BOOST MORALE.

BUT THAT MEANS--!

OH, MAN...

THEY'RE OPENING THE DOOR.

SO YOU'RE CURRENTLY USELESS NOW?

C'MON...

I COULD USE SOME GOOD NEWS.

WRAAM

=OOF!=

WAIT A MINUTE. *WHAT?!*

UGH.

THUNK

WHAT *HAPPENED?!*

WHY ARE YOU HERE?

THEY *KNOW* ABOUT US.

I'M SO *STUPID.* I DIDN'T TELL THEM, BUT THE PREMIER ASKED IF I'D SEEN YOUR FACE, AND HE JUST *KNEW.*

HE DIDN'T EVEN WAIT FOR ME TO ANSWER. THEY... THREW ME IN HERE IMMEDIATELY.

I SUSPECT TO PREVENT ME FROM TALKING TO ANYONE.

HE DIDN'T BOTHER TO ASK WHAT MY FACE *LOOKED* LIKE?

NO. HE ALREADY *KNEW.*

WHOEVER IS KEEPING THIS SECRET, IT STARTS AT THE TOP.

YOU DOUBLE-CROSSED ME... AND LOOK AT YOU! LOOK WHAT IT GOT YOU!

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA

I *HATE* YOU.

SHUNK

SHUNK

=SIGH=

I CAN'T SPEAK FOR LONG ON THIS CHANNEL.

WHAT IS IT, ZALILAK?

I TRUST YOU DETECTED THE SHIP THAT APPROACHED THE SACRED RING?

WE DID.

IT WAS A ZERTONIAN PILOT, WITH AN AGORRIAN ***PRISONER.***

YES.

THEY SAW EACH OTHER'S ***FACES.*** WE'RE GOING TO DEAL WITH OUR PILOT ***AS AGREED.*** IT'S JUST A MATTER OF THE AGORRIAN.

I KNOW WHAT MUST BE DONE. I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS. ***CARRY ON.***

I THINK IT'S MORE COMPLICATED THAN YOU REALIZE. I DON'T NORMALLY RISK CONTACT FOR SUCH A TRIVIAL MATTER, YES.

CIRCUMSTANCES ARE... UNIQUE.

I THOUGHT IT BEST I PERSONALLY REACH OUT TO YOU TO DISCUSS HOW TO HANDLE THIS MATTER.

CONSIDERING WHO THIS PILOT IS.

WHO IS HE?

HE'S YOUR SON, MINISTER DULIN.

...

DO WHAT YOU WILL.

HE WAS LOST TO ME LONG AGO.

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO VOIDRIVALS@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome to back to the soon-to-be titled VOID RIVALS mailbag. I'm Sean, the editor, joined by Robert. Man, do people get excited by the prospect of naming a letters page. SO MANY SUGGESTIONS, I couldn't get through them all in time to send this issue to print. I don't think I've seen this much mail since THE WALKING DEAD #100.

Kirkman, here in italics! SO MUCH MAIL! That's a good sign, though. I can't wait to dive in and see what you people have to say. So let's not wait!

• • • • • • • • • • • • •

Hi there!

I'm Paul G! Long time fan of you for over ten years now, Kirkman! Sorry it took me that long to finally be able to write a letter to ya too! I started following you shortly after issue 100 of The Walking Dead and I've been hooked on your other work like Invincible, and Outcast. Now I've been an avid Transformers fan for about ten years now too, so to see you not only be starting a new sci-fi comic (my favorite genre), but also a sci-fi comic with TRANSFORMERS (my favorite franchise besides TWD of course!) made me incredibly excited!

I absolutely LOVE the characters of Darak and Solila so far. If I may ask, was there any specific influences you had with writing them and/or their respective races (Agorrians and Zertonians)?

I'd say the main influence is Transformers and G.I. Joe. In an attempt to create something that stands alongside those historic franchises, Lorenzo and I are just trying to come up with two unique opposing forces that will hopefully stand the test of time in a similar way. We'll see!

I also love how with issue #2, you're digging REAL DEEP into TF lore and not just bringing in big names everyone will know like Jetfire. Like come on, SKUXXOID?! I never expected to see, let alone hear from him again! Will these obscure TF references though, be exclusive to stuff from the G1 cartoon, or can we expect stuff from other reaches of the Transformers franchise like the Marvel and IDW comics? The IDW comics especially were my favorite comics alongside Walking Dead, I spent so many years picking both up from my local store

While the G1 cartoon is the primary inspiration, we'll be weaving in elements from across media… eventually.

What Sean said!

Anyways, thank you SO MUCH for another outstanding issue of Void Rivals! I can't wait to see how Darak and Solila's story will continue, and hopefully we'll get to see them pop up in other corners of the Energon Universe as well!

Take care again,

Paul G.

Thanks for writing in, Paul! We have all kinds of awesome stuff planned, so stick with us!

• • • • • • • • • • • • •

Hey Void Rivals crew!

First off, big fan of the series so far! Just finished issue #2 and I love the designs for the characters Question for Robert and Lorenzo: What were the inspirations for the designs for Darak and Solila?

Well, Lorenzo can answer better than I. Hopefully we can snag an answer from him before the print deadline. From my side of things, I told Lorenzo they were both alien pilots. They needed to be humanoid, but the helmets

needed to be shaped in ways that made them appear like different alien races, hence Solila having a triangle shaped helmet (with one "horn" bashed off). I may have mentioned Han Solo, which may have led to Darak's jacket. I'm not sure. Lorenzo brilliantly established a triangle motif for the Zertonians that has found itself in all the designs as we've gone back to Zertonia. I'm telling you, the guy is brilliant.

Hey, everybody, I made it to the VOID RIVALS mail page! Awesome! Ok, so from the very beginning, I wanted to define their look starting from simple shapes that could clearly differentiate them while also saying something about their characters. Therefore, a circle for Darak and a triangle for the Solila. From helmet to toes, I tried to put round and soft shapes on Darak and angular lines on Solila. Even the colors kinda echo this approach: Darak has warm colors and Solila is mostly green and a touch of blue - so cold hues. That's basically it. Oh, and of course, by association, I applied these guidelines on their two civilizations, too. Ok, back into the inky shadows. Handroid rules!

The reveal of the Energon Universe was SO COOL! I've always only had base level knowledge of Transformers/G.I. Joe but this new comic universe has me super excited to read everything that y'all publish and look into the older stuff. The current line up for books that have already been announced (pre-SDCC) all sound great and I'm looking forward to reading them later this year.

Also, my suggestion for the letters page name is the Void Archival! I always love that you guys get the fans to help name the letters page in the books.

Here's to the Energon Universe!

-Robbie O'Bryan

Pretty good suggestion, Robbie! We'll just have to see if it beats the competition.

. . . . . .

Dear Voiders,

These have been a fun couple of issues to start the series. I think Lorenzo's art has probably looked it's cleanest yet, and Robert, I feel like you have the ultimate toy box to play with here. I'm not super ga ga about transformers or g.i.joe. but I'm excited to see how the other series will connect and build up on each other. And DWJ could draw a book about a bum hunting rats with a wiggle ball bat and I'd buy it so I'll pick up transformers when it hits. I think my favorite character so far is handroid, so keep him/her/them coming. Here's my terrible ideas for letters page names:

1. Rivaletters
2. Handroid written Notes
3. Transform and Write In!
4. Words from Space
5. Star Words (might get sued)
6. Voices of the Void

And there you go. See you guys next month!

Andy Bobo

Human in disguise

Grand Rapids MI

It brings joy to my heart to see this series bringing new fans to Transformers and G.I. Joe. I'm so thrilled with the world Daniel, Joshua, and I are building, and I'm confident fans both new and old will enjoy it.

. . . . . .

I don't know anything about the transformers universe, will this affect my understanding of the story at all? it's very exciting to see one of the greatest duos in comics back together again! Already hooked after issue #2.

-Dylan

This might be the most frequently asked question and the answer is always: NO! You can enjoy the entire Energon Universe line without any prior knowledge. Each first issue will give you everything you need to know about these characters, so you can just focus on the story being told.

Longtime fans might see where we're headed with certain characters and plots… but we have plenty of surprises in store for them, too.

. . . . . .

Hello,

First, thank you for an excellent issue two, of Void Rivals!

Second, really loving the history drops of this issue. The pacing is very good. The art is fantastic!

Third, my question (if it can be answered) is...when is this in comparison to Earth's time?! The Skuxxiods were originally introduced to

be in the near future, where Rodimus Prime led the Autobots. Could we be looking at the same timeline for Void Rivals?

Keep up the great work!

Christopher Hynes

That is a question I'd prefer not to answer… but one would imagine the Skuxxoids have existed as a civilization well before they first appeared in the animated series.

Yeah, this is definitely not the same continuity as the old TV show. Also, as you'll see in TRANSFORMERS #1 (out in October!) that issue picks up the thread with Jetfire after we last saw him in VOID RIVALS #1. So the timelines with TRANSFORMERS and VOID RIVALS are pretty well aligned.

. . . . . .

Hi! I got the first issue as soon as I heard it was the start of a new shared universe. Transformers is one of my favourite franchises, and I love every single robot from Cybertron, so when I saw Jetfire on the pages of Void Rivals I was happy to see these big guys back in comics again. There's not too much stuff for us robot fans in comics, so Transformers has always been special in that regard, and I'm so excited to see more drawings of these powerful metal beings in the future.

As for Void Rivals alone, I like the way you're making a series with some elements from Transformers' lore without it being entirely a book about the robots... Energon seems to be very important in this universe, apparently? I'm looking forward to know more about these two stranded aliens, and what awaits them! (I love their designs btw).

Energon is soooo important that we named the entire universe after it. Why is it important? You'll have to keep reading.

I also heard G.I. Joe was coming back as well and also as part of this comic universe. And maybe even more original stories like Void Rivals. Things are about to get even more interesting, and your work already caught my interest!

Robert

. . . . . .

Robert & Lorenzo & company,

When I heard you guys were teaming up again I was very excited. I was a big fan of Oblivion Song and Robert

I've been reading your stuff since the days of Battle Pope. To this day, Invincible is still one of my favorite books overall and my favorite superhero comic EVER. So when I heard about Void Rivals I was on board. Then when I learned of the big reveal with Transformers I was ecstatic. I watched both Transformers and GI Joe growing up. I'm a huge fan of Transformers and currently have 2 glass display cases full of them (and then some). I was never able to get into the IDW stuff because there was just too much. I'm hoping you keep things more grounded and close knit.

So enough blabbing. I got some questions

1. Was the Sacred Ring built to save both their races because of the dying sun?

Yes. It was a collaboration from both sides. A massive, multi-generation project that brought the two planets together.

2. How does it not get sucked into the black hole?

Science… but it's still a very precarious situation.

It's a ring AROUND the black hole... those are some strong arches.

3. Are the jewels in their heads symbolic? Or do they have some sort of purpose?

Yes.

4. I know it'll have its own title but will we see more Transformers at some point? Or was that just a teaser?

This issue! And you never know when you might see one next. They are, after all, robots in disguise.

5. Not a question, just wanted to say "Handroid" is very clever

We thank you.

6. Different topic but do you think you'd ever go back and do more Invincible? I think I legit almost cried at the end of that last issue. (Real men cry...I think.)

Nope. But there is a TV series to enjoy!

That's all I got. The last time I wrote into a comic book was the 90's. I think it was Stormwatch.

Letters column...the most obvious name would be "Into the Void" or maybe "Rival Quotes"

Huge fan 4-life,

Adam Mace

Plymouth, MA

In all my time in comics, I think this is the first time we've received a letter from my hometown. The questions got you in, but the location sealed the deal.

. . . . . .

Hi there!

Just wanted to send a quick message saying love the comic! I haven't read comics since I was 8 but when I heard the transformers and G.I. Joe were coming back I said screw it! never a better time to jump back in. Been loving the story so far and I can't wait to see where it goes. With their recent run ins with the transformers continuity how close would you say these 2 races are from Cybertron and Earth? Are we talking same arm of the galaxy or many galaxies away? As far as the name for the letters page I personally love "bottled messages from the void". Keep up the great work!

Sincerely,

Connor W. Sherrill

Based on Skuxxoid's movement, the Sacred Ring is closer to Cybertron than Earth, but still very far away since neither Darak nor Solila has encountered a Transformer before.

. . . . . .

Hello Team Awesome 90's

I am a big fan of Mr. Kirkman's works, like his Marvel Team-Up run, Walking Dead and especially Invincible (just watched the second season trailer and I can't believe you got the great Peter Cullen on board. I would have LOVED him as Conquest, but the Great Thaedus is a solid choice because "Great" describes both Cullen and Thaedus). Mr. Felici's art is an awesome choice with his original character design and universe look is spectacular and I LOVED his Jetfire (I look forward to more toys that I grew up with drawn in his style). Luckily, I didn't surf the web a lot before issue 1 and was actually surprised with Jetfire's appearance. I also just purchased the Marz Jr. 2nd print variant of issue one because I grew up reading the original book version of that cover starring Grover (so many wonderful memories of that, thank you). My comic shop will be pulling this title for me and this is currently one of the few titles I will be looking forward to purchasing and reading. Now for the real reason I am contacting you, I have a (GREAT) suggestion for the letters page name:

"Con-void-sations"

I thought about sending more suggestions, but that was the first one I came up with and I better get it sent off before some other genius suggestions it. Thank you for this awesome comic and I can wait to see what else unfolds and who else shows up.

Travis Johnson

Reading, PA

Good news, bad news, Travis. The good news is I often go for the silliest letters column names possible. PENvinciPALS from INVINCIBLE is a favorite. "Roast Office" in FIRE POWER. So along those lines... "Con-void-sations" is a STRONG contender. The bad news is I'm not the one picking this title, and I believe Sean Mackiewicz is not as big a fan of ridiculous letters column titles. But you never know! Good luck!

. . . . . .

My idea for the letters page name is:
Handroid's Corner

-James

Why hasn't anyone suggested TALK TO THE HANDROID?!?!

A good one, but an obvious one. But good. But obvious.

. . . . . .

We'll see you next month as we find out how Zertonians treat their prisoners. If you're looking for something to read before then, TRANSFORMERS #1 comes out NEXT WEEK! It's awesome. You're free to make your mind up for yourself by checking out the following preview, but it's really, really good.

-Sean

Wait?! Next week?!! WHOA!! People are going to FREAK OUT! Excellent!!

-Robert

WHOAH!

SPIKE!

SPIKE!!!

FRAM!

AGH!

SPIKE, ARE YOU--?

WHOAH..

WHAT THE HECK...?

WHERE *ARE* WE?

WE...WE HAVE TO GET *OUT* OF HERE! WHAT *IS* THIS THING? SPIKE!

...SPIKE?

THEY LOOK LIKE... I DON'T KNOW. SOME SORT OF ROBOTS.

WHAT ARE THOSE?

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